

Do you wish for mealtimes that are pleasant & easy?

## Try some Mealtime Magic!

### Mealtime Magic happens when eating is easy.

Children eat a lot better when eating is easy.

#### To make eating easy:

- Use a child-size spoon and cup.
- Use a plate and bowl with steep sides to push food against.
- Cut all foods into bite-sized pieces.
- Serve finely chopped meat with moist foods, like mashed potatoes or macaroni and cheese.
- Serve small amounts! Start with 1 or 2 tablespoons of each food. Your child can always ask for more.
- Show how to do things. Children learn more by watching you.



Each meal should have at least one easy-to-eat food that you know your child likes. You can relax, knowing that there is at least one food on the table that your child will eat.

#### To make clean up easy:

- Use a bib.
- Put newspaper under the chair.
- Have a paper towel or sponge handy for spills.

### Mealtime Manners can help prevent choking.

Children this age choke easily. Cut foods into bite-sized pieces.

- Hard, round foods can cause choking at this age. Cut hot dogs and carrots the long way first. Then cut them up so they are not round.
- Table manners also prevent choking. Children this age need to hear your rules about how to act many times before they learn them.

#### Remind your child:

- We sit down to eat. We don't walk or run with food in our mouths.
- We don't chew and talk at the same time.
- We take small bites.
- We chew our food well.
- We swallow our food before we have a drink.

#### Do you have questions about your child's eating?

Ask your WIC staff. They can help you with all your nutrition concerns.

mealtime magic  
with your **1-2**  
year old



# What to expect from your child between 1 and 2 years old:

Knowing what to expect will help you relax. You can say to yourself, “Okay, this is normal at my child’s age. It’s not personal. I can deal with this.”

Expect children this age to eat better:

- when they are hungry
- when they are allowed to feed themselves
- when they can make choices
- when they are not forced to eat
- when they are not distracted by toys or television.

Expect a small appetite because growth is slow now.

- Children this age may eat tiny amounts at a meal or snack.
- They may prefer to drink rather than eat.

Expect your child to refuse new foods. This is normal.

- Children this age like foods with mild flavors.
- They often prefer soft, moist, easy-to-eat foods.
- They avoid foods they have to chew, like meat.
- They may refuse a new food based on how it looks.
- They often go on “food jags,” wanting the same food over and over again.



It’s good to know that even the pickiest eater will eat enough to grow and be healthy if the foods you offer are nutritious.

# 10 tips that work like magic!

## Eat together every day!

Children eat better when they eat with others. Don’t make them eat alone. Eat as many meals together as you can. Talk and have a good time. Make mealtime special.

## Make sure your child is hungry for meals!

Children only eat well when they are hungry! At this age, it can be every two or three hours. This makes healthy snacks very important. Offer snacks between meals, but not too close to mealtime. Snacks too close to meals will spoil the appetite.

## Make meals pleasant.

Children eat better when mealtime is pleasant! Try not to worry about what or how much your child is eating. Enjoy your own meal and the chance to relax and connect with your family.

## Children eat better in a high chair or at a table.

Children this age are easily distracted. Sitting in a high chair or at a table helps them focus on eating. Turn off the TV and remove toys to keep the focus on mealtime.

## Praise works like magic!

Notice and praise the things you like about how your child behaves at mealtime. Praise the behaviors you want to see more often and your child will repeat them!

## Get your child completely off the bottle.

Children eat better when they are weaned from the bottle. Little sips all day from a bottle or sippy cup can spoil the appetite for meals. Use mealtime to teach your child to drink from a cup.

## You decide what’s to eat.

You should decide the foods at each meal. Serve at least one food you know your child likes. Jumping up to make your child some other food makes mealtime harder.

## Get in a daily routine of meals and snacks.

Make life easier for yourself by getting into some daily routines. Eat about the same times every day. Planned meals and snacks will keep your child from asking for food all the time.

## Take pressure off your child about how much to eat.

When you stop trying to make your child eat, your child will eat better! Let your child decide what and how much to eat, from the healthy foods you have fixed. Your child may eat only a little bit and may not try all you offer.

## Be creative with new foods!

Ask your child to help buy or fix a new food. Expect to offer a new food many times before your child will eat it. Eat the new food yourself! You are a role model. Your child is always learning what to do by watching you!